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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
20 November 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Developments in Countries on the Counter-insurgency List

1. Laos

Neutralist commander Kong Le and Pathet Lao chief Singkapo met on 16 November on the Plaine des Jarres and arranged a cease-fire. Additionally, they called for further talks designed to "create a favorable atmosphere" for a meeting of Souvanna and Souphanouvong. While precise reasons behind Pathet Lao willingness to negotiate are unclear, it is possible that the Communists are seeking a temporary detente to provide time to prepare for broader military ventures or that they hope to undermine the neutralist-rightist alliance by offering minor concessions to the neutralists. It is unlikely that the cease-fire will bring a halt to all fighting on the Plaine (already there are reports of shelling in violation of the agreement), and its duration is uncertain and tenuous.

2. South Vietnam

Viet Cong activity apparently continues at a high level this week, after hitting an all-time high last week, when the number of attacks jumped from 165 in the preceding week to 233. These attacks have been primarily small-scale and appear designed as much for psychological impact in the wake of the coup as for actual military gain. The number of larger scale attacks, however, is so far at a higher rate than in October. Government casualties and weapons losses also rose substantially last week, while Communist losses were up to a lesser extent.

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Government forces are resuming normal operational activity. The new military regime apparently plans some changes in the strategic hamlet program, but their plans have not been clarified. They intend apparently to concern themselves with weaknesses from overextension of the program, and to divorce themselves from the previous political indoctrination carried out by Ngo Dinh Nhu. The government is encouraging the remnants of the once-powerful politico-religious sects to rally, but will have some problems if various sect leaders try to put conditions on their support for the regime.

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#### 4. Venezuela

Twenty-seven terrorist incidents were reported during the week 8-14 November, compared with 18 the previous week, a high of 51 during 11-17 October, and a low of 14 during 25-31 October.

Attacks on US interests included the invasion of the home of a US Army Mission member in Caracas in his absence, arson at the Caracas office of Remington Rand, and attempted arson at the office of the Diners' Club.

On 18 November, the terrorists called for a general strike for 19 November, threatening to "bomb" any business establishment which remained open. Communist power in Venezuelan unions is minimal, and only the threat of force will influence businessmen to close.

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Venezuela (continued)

Terrorists' efforts to enforce the general strike resulted in a wave of shooting, bombing, and arson throughout Caracas. Terrorists also burned a Dupont Paint warehouse in Maracaibo. Troops were called to aid police, particularly in the slum areas, which are now under virtual martial law. Terrorism probably will continue at a high level in Caracas and other cities, and possibly intensive guerrilla activity will erupt in the mountains of Falcon State. Strong measures by the government, including preventive arrest of known terrorists, should keep the situation in Caracas under control.

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